

UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Cecil Clements

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Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do; I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Let us pray.

Father, would You send Your Holy Spirit to lead us as we think about Your Word. Help us to understand it, and to glean from it, nuggets of truth that we can apply in our lives and into our situations. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Jesus is stopped in the crowd by somebody who says, "Will You be the arbitrator? Will You help my brother and me to figure out what's to be done with our inheritance? Or rather, will You speak to him about it?" And Jesus says, "Man, who made me an arbitrator? I'm not here to judge between you about your inheritance?" Then He tells the crowd, seizing an opportunity, as it were. "Be very careful about envy and greed. Why? Because your life is never fulfilled by a lot of things that you may have, in terms of inheritance or possessions. Your life isn't fulfilled because of what you own." So, Jesus is saying that for you to have an abundance of life or to have a life that is meaningful, it cannot be filled with possessions. What must it be filled with? The answer is: God.

The Passion translation puts it like this: This is what will happen to all those who fill up their lives with everything but God. Jesus goes on to give them an illustration. He says, "A wealthy landowner had a farm that produced bumper crops. In fact, it filled his barns to overflowing, and he thought, 'What should I do now that every barn is full and I have nowhere else to store my crops. I know what I'll do – I'll tear down the barn and build one massive one that will hold all my grain and my goods. Then I can just sit back surrounded with comfort and ease, and I'll enjoy my life with no worries at all. Eat, drink and be merry!' And God says to him, 'You fool! What if today your life is required of you, your soul is required of you, that today is the last day of your life?' What happens to everything that you have spent so much of your life investing into – your time, your energy, your potential, your talents, your gifts – all of that went into this particular aspect of your life, but it has no worth because you can't enjoy it. Because today is the day your soul is being required of you.

That's a very, very pertinent question of us even today, in the midst of all this anxiety. So many people are worried; they are worried about their life, they are worried about their health, they are worried about the work, and above all, they are worried about death. Because we see

the vast number of people who have died who didn't expect to die. They had no clue that this was going to be the end of their lives. And yet it was.

This then brings up a very important question in this context: What are you and I pursuing? The things that we are pursuing, do they have God written all over it? Or do they have just our own selves, our flesh, our joy, what we want to do and enjoy by ourselves? In other words, do they have kingdom value? Jesus would say later in the same passage, "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." Seek first His kingdom.

Well, if you've even begun to consider what the Word is instructing us till now, then I imagine that there could be just a little bit of angst or anxiety that's on the periphery. Because if you think about it – this is the word of God, and maybe I've not pursued God as I ought to have. Maybe I've pursued other things. Then if I need to make a change right now, how does it affect everything else in my life? Are you beginning to get a little anxious?

I think Jesus understood what would happen. Amazingly, if we read on, He goes on to talk about anxiety. He says: "Listen to me. Never let anxiety enter your hearts. Never worry about any of your needs such as food and clothing. For your life is infinitely more than just food or the clothing you wear. Look at the birds; they are carefree. They don't think about where their next meal is coming from. Look at the lilies in the field. Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. And they don't get up in the morning and say, 'Okay, how do I look beautiful?' God, your heavenly Father, takes care of all of that." Then this beautiful line, very profound, says this, "O struggling one, with so many doubts. Don't let worry enter your life. Live above the anxious cares about your personal needs. O struggling one with so many doubts."

Are you that struggling one with so many doubts this evening? Well, Jesus is speaking directly to you, and He says, "Don't let worry enter your life. Live above the anxious cares, above your personal needs." I wonder this evening, whether the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and saying, "You need to make a course alignment; the things that you have pursued don't really have kingdom worth."

Remember what Paul said, that one day everything that we have done, will be burnt up with fire. What has been of great use to the kingdom will be preserved – gold, silver, precious stones. Those that have no worth will be burnt up as hay, stone and rubble. Jesus is saying, "Nothing that doesn't have God in it is of any use." Is the Spirit of God speaking to you, beloved, and saying, "Will you bring about a change today?"

Maybe that's why God has given you these moments in isolation, to sit by yourselves, to think about things, to think about greater aspects of life and eternity, to think beyond the temporal things that we can get caught up with. Suddenly today they seem so fleeting, and the permanent outweighs the transient, temporal things of life. God is saying, "Will you think about your priorities? Do you need to be making a change in the priorities of your life? do you need to bring God more into the equation?"

That's our message this evening, and that's our question: Do you need to re-prioritize your life today? My prayer is that you will.

O heavenly Father, saturate Your Word with Your Spirit. For those who have been convicted by Your Spirit to make a course change, help them to know what to do and how to do it.

Don't let another moment go, Master, without them responding to Your Word. I pray that You would flood the place that they are in with Your Spirit, that You would move them to make changes and align with Your perfect will. In Your beautiful name, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.